



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

3/2/2021

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for SB 720

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First for Oregon. We elevate data and lived experience to prioritize children and center communities. We continue to connect a community of 115 advocates, coalitions, and organizations through The Children's Agenda, a legislative agenda championing equitable state legislative policies and shared investments to improving the lives of Oregon's children and their families.

SB 720: Funding the Family Preservation Project is part of the 2021 Children's Agenda. We hope that you and your colleagues will agree with us that this is unfinished business from 2019 and 2020 and support this investment for Oregon mothers and children. We believe this bill is important because:

- Close to 68,000 children in Oregon have had an incarcerated parent in their lifetime.
- Children with incarcerated parents are more likely to be placed in Oregon Department of Human Services' care, less likely to earn college degrees, and six times more likely to become incarcerated themselves.
- 84% of incarcerated women are mothers, and most of them have two or more children.

Having a parent in prison can significantly impact a child's mental health, social behavior, and educational outcomes. Oregon needs a systemic response to help incarcerated mothers and their children overcome cycles of poverty, trauma, and intergenerational involvement in the criminal justice system.

The Family Preservation Project (FPP) has positively impacted the lives of thousands of Oregon mothers and children. FPP works with mothers at

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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Coffee Creek, helping them take ownership of their lives, thereby changing the lives of their children, reducing trauma, and providing support they do not receive anywhere else. By offering services and interventions that promote family reunification and connectivity, FPP enables mothers to build promising future pathways for themselves and their children. Research shows that maintaining family connectivity is the single best predictor of post-incarceration success for women, thereby FPP plays a key role in protecting Oregon families from continuing to go through the revolving door.

SB 720 would establish FPP in statute and provide \$650,000 in funding per biennium through 2029. These dollars would be a wise investment given that over the last decade, only approximately 5% of FPP's participants have returned to prison compared to the statewide average of 13-15%. Investing in FPP could save our state hundreds of thousands of dollars in the long term by reducing the costs associated with recidivism and helping children maintain placement with family.

We ask for your support for SB 720, and together we hope we can get it across the finish line and funded this session.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

Peggy Ting, Policy Intern

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

View the 2021 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda